

"IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE.**Shalt Thou Eat Bread."**

After Adam had sinned, God called him into his presence and uttered these words. To us they suggest an inquiry. They give a forceful suggestion. Was it of the nature of a curse on Adam? or in the nature of a blessing?

The curse for sin is found in the address, not to men, but to Satan. "Behold thou art cursed above all cattle.....Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." But immediately—in the latter part of the address to Satan—God changes the tone of his voice from curse to blessing. Seeing that man has put himself in friendship with the devil, God offers to change this relation and to change it radically. He adds: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head," the head of Satan. This is a promise of redemption.

Then God addresses the woman, but in terms not of a curse, but of redemption. He promises "greatly to increase thy conception" so that even if some of her offspring be lost, the number of the redeemed shall, in later days, be greater than if she had never sinned. He puts along with it the promise of chastisement on her, and woman has ever borne that chastisement; but with it there has been the hope of a joy that God will "greatly multiply." And in the days of the Hebrews, woman anticipated with joy its expectations.

This leads us on to the later promise to Adam. God puts no curse on Adam. He puts a curse on the insensate ground. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." The curse on the ground would serve ever to remind the sons of Adam of the sinfulness and the ill desert of sin. Every weed reminds the husbandman that things are not what they ought to be, nor what they would be if it were not for sin. Every drought suggests to him that with some things God is not well pleased.

But this reminder is not a curse; it is a blessing. It is a means of sanctification. It helps to bring him to constant penitence for sin. This reminder of sin, God is going to keep before sinful men until the last of them has learned the lessons of penitence, and then, when the last great day shall come, "the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." For God "hath subjected the same in hope," in hope of deliverance from the curse, and of a share in the beauties of the new heavens and the new earth. Even the curse on the ground is a step in the progress of redemption.

Right alongside of this is the promise that "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." If the former words, "Cursed is the ground," be not severity but pardoning love, surely we may look for pardoning love in the latter phrase. Yes, and it is there.

"The sweat of thy face" points to occupation in life by which the sinner may find help in resisting temptation. An idle brain is the devil's workshop. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. But the Lord assigns to us not idle hands, but busy fingers. And though this is toilsome, yet is it an aid to piety.

The very weariness of the toil renders us the same service as the barrenness of the ground. It makes us

feel the sinfulness of the sin which brings with it the suffering. And this is a lesson which needs daily repetition.

And then, the seasons of rest that follow the toil. Especially the Sabbath rest. How it speaks to us of heaven! How it makes us long for heaven! How it stimulates us to seek for heaven, and to prepare ourselves for that sweet rest!

And thus we see how even the chastisements of earth are made under the beneficent hand of God a means of great and immeasurable blessing.

THE USUAL ATTACK ON MISSIONS.

Moved by the Sigel incident in New York, where, from a mad infatuation and probable jealousy, a Chinaman murdered his Christian teacher, who had seemingly encouraged him to think of her in other relations than those of a simple teacher, the Times-Democrat, of New Orleans, reads an oracular lesson to the Christian ministry and to fathers and mothers against missions to the Chinese either at home or abroad. Catching up, contrary to its usual most conservative and thoughtful editorial study of large problems, much of the yellowness of some of its contemporaries, it willingly consents—yea, even hasters—to "shock militant Christians." Not pausing to reflect that this is one case only and that hasty generalization is as unreasonable as falsehood itself, though often more innocent; not stopping to inquire as to the facts in distant China, and snatching up the over and over again refuted assertions of Sir Robert Hart, an enemy of foreign missions, it proceeds to state that "the pretended Chinese 'convert' in the Orient professes belief either to share in the mission relief stores or for the purpose of learning the English tongue and foreign methods. In this country, however, the purpose of the Chinese who counterfeit conversion is shown to be even lower and more base." If the author of this most unworthy, uninformed and prejudiced statement will tell us where "the mission relief stores" of our Presbyterian Church, which has for nearly fifty years conducted successful missions in the heart of China, are to be found, and who put them there, and where they came from, his information will be regarded as a distinct and remarkable revelation. The Church which sustains the worker there knows nothing about any such "mission relief stores." If he will also ascertain and report how many of the thousands of our converts over there have become such in order to learn the English tongue, he will make another revelation which will astonish the world. Beyond the maintenance of a few dispensaries, where daily relief to physical suffering is given to those actually in pain, the great multitude of whom never appear again and do not in the first instance come with any assertion or thought of belief in the doctrines of the medical helpers; beyond one or two small hospitals and beyond the help rendered a year or two ago in the awful famine in China, the "mission relief stores" exist solely in the mind of the opponent of missions. The Church knows nothing about them. It has never provided them.

The testimony of the men on the field, whose familiarity with the facts is practical and not